**Reflections – 19 January 2025 – Epiphany 2**

**Bible study on John 2:1-11 – Unexpected abundance**

**Begin with an opening prayer**

Like guests at a wedding feast,
we have come from far and near
to join in this family celebration.
The gifts we bring are ourselves –
our hearts and minds and souls and strength,
to share with God and each other in love.
It is a bring-and-share celebration
of God’s union with the world.
Let us feast and rejoice together,
in God’s abundant love.
**Amen.**

**Read the passage**

*Consider different ways to read the text. For example, hearing it in more than one version of the Bible.*

John 2: 1-11

**Jesus Changes Water Into Wine**

**2**On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus’ mother was there, **2**and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. **3**When the wine was gone, Jesus’ mother said to him, “They have no more wine.”

**4**“Woman,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%202&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26100a)] why do you involve me?” Jesus replied. “My hour has not yet come.”

**5**His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”

**6**Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%202&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26102b)]

**7**Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water”; so they filled them to the brim.

**8**Then he told them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.”

They did so, **9**and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside **10**and said, “Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.”

**11**What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

**Explore and respond to the text**

*Start by reading the Bible notes below. You may want to read them more than once, or pause after each paragraph to reflect on what you have read.*

**Bible notes**

Many of us will have heard the phrase ‘Jesus himself went to a wedding’ (it’s part of the marriage service in some churches). But there are other significant ideas at play in this story found in John. It is the first of the ‘miraculous signs’ in John’s Gospel that reveal Jesus’ identity as the Messiah. As theologian Marianne Meye Thompson writes, ‘His deed calls to mind the Old Testament promises of the feasting and drinking that will characterize the (messianic) age to come.’1 It is appropriate to link to today’s reading from Isaiah (also see Isaiah 25:6-8). In an unobtrusive way, Jesus here declares his messianic intentions. The ‘new wine’ is the eschatological abundance that we read about in the Old Testament and finds its fruition in Jesus Christ (see Amos 9:13-14). The words of Jesus to his mother (v.4) appear harsh, but Jesus uses the same term (‘Woman’) to refer to his mother at the cross (John 19:26 – even so we cannot rule out that there was degree of reprimand in his tone here). Jesus here shows that he is not acting in response to the obligation of earthly ties, but according to the designs of the Father, which will happen at the right time.

**Reflection**

*Spend a few moments thinking about what stands out for you from the Bible reading. This idea may help.*

The themes for this week centre on the abundance of God. The glorious and most unjustified gift of new life comes from the person and work of Jesus. How can we, as Christians, follow Christ’s example of abundant generosity? In what ways are we scandalously generous, offering more to others than is necessary? Themes of hospitality and generous giving should be considered in the context that these things are but pale reflections of the generosity of God in salvation. Our acts of kindness can operate as signs, pointing beyond themselves to the one who is ultimately generous.

**Questions for reflection**

*You may wish to use these questions and the picture to help you think about or discuss issues arising from this week’s Bible passage.*



**Questions**

* When have you experienced unexpected abundance?
* What is your favourite image of God’s generous abundance?
* Can you surprise someone with a generous act this week?

**A prayer to end the Bible study**

At the wedding at Cana,
Mary saw there was a problem.
She told Jesus about it and he responded
with unexpectedly abundant generosity.
May we have eyes that see the needs of others,
a faith that expects Jesus to help,
and the confidence to pester him in prayer.
**Amen.**